

MAR 26 1962

Approved For Release 2005/01/05 : CIA-RDP75-00149R000700440015-4

X *Per 2* SYMINGTON

McNamara Says Carriers Are Not Needed in Major War

Vessels Useful, but Bombers and
Missiles Are Adequate to Attack En-
emy, Senators Are Told.

WASHINGTON, March 26 (AP).

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ROBERT S. McNAMARA sees a significant but diminishing role for aircraft carriers in future United States military planning. Their principal function, he told the Senate Armed Services Committee recently, would be in limited and cold war.

"There are many potential trouble spots in the world where the attack carrier is and will continue to be the only practical means of bringing our air striking power to bear," McNamara said in testimony made public yesterday.

However, he said that even without carriers the United States is capable of destroying essential targets in the Soviet Union after an initial surprise nuclear attack. The job could be done, he said, by the United States strategic retaliatory force — bombers, intercontinental ballistic missiles and the Polaris submarine-missile system.

"AS WE ACQUIRE larger forces of strategic missiles and Polaris submarines, the need for the attack carrier in the general war role will diminish," McNamara said.

McNamara has supported the Navy's request for congressional authorization to construct another carrier which is proposed in the military budget before Congress.

The Pentagon also reported also that a new atomic-powered frigate, which is in the fiscal 1963 budget, and the fleet's fifth and largest surface warship, the USS *Enterprise*, will be built at a cost of \$1.2 billion.

The limit on atomic-powered surface ship construction does not affect the nuclear submarine program. He said 29 will be at sea or under construction by June 1964.

By United Press International.

McNamara disclosed also that intelligence estimates of Russia's missile strength have been substantially reduced.

He said that 1960 critics of the so-called missile gap leveled their charges "in good faith." The critics included President Kennedy.

SENATOR STUART Symington (Dem.), Missouri, who was questioning McNamara at the January hearing, indicated he thought the missile gap was both created and eliminated by the Central Intelligence Agency.

Symington said that the estimate of Russia's intercontinental missile strength had been reduced 95.5 per cent since the 1958-59 period. He said that CIA trimmed appraisals of Soviet bomber production also.

McNamara did not say how many intercontinental ballistic missiles Russia has ready for firing. But his statement lent support to speculation that the Russians might have as few as 50 to 75 I.C.B.M.s ready for launch.

The United States has 54 Atlas I.C.B.M.s on launch pads and 48 Minuteman I.C.B.M.s in storage.